

REMARKS

Applicants request favorable reconsideration and allowance of the subject application in view of the preceding amendments and the following remarks.

Claims 2, 3, 5, 7, 11, 15, 16, 18, 20, 25, 34-42, 53-72 and 77 are presented for consideration. Claims 2, 3, 5, 7, 11, 15, 16, 18, 20, 25, 34, 35, 37-42 and 61-69 are independent. Claims 73-76 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Claims 11, 20, 34-42 and 72 have been amended to clarify features of the subject invention, while claim 77 has been added to recite additional features of the subject invention. Support for these changes and this claim can be found in the original application, as filed. Therefore, no new matter has been added.

Applicants note with appreciation that claims 2, 3, 5, 7, 11, 15, 16, 18, 20, 25, 34-42 and 53-72 have been indicated as being allowable over the art of record. Applicants submit that the foregoing changes to claims 11, 20, 34-42 and 72 merely place those claims in better form for allowance, so that those changes do not affect the allowability of those claims. In addition to these claims being allowable, Applicants submit that new claim 77, which depends from allowed independent claim 15, also should be deemed allowable at the outset.

Applicants request favorable reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection set forth in the above-noted Office Action.

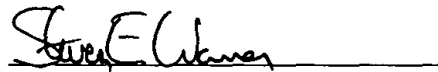
Claims 73-76 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,426,790 to Hayashi. Applicants submit that this patent does not teach many features of the present invention, as previously recited in these claims. Therefore, this rejection is respectfully

traversed. Nevertheless, as discussed above, Applicants have canceled claims 73-76 without prejudice or disclaimer to expedite allowance of this application.

For the foregoing reasons, all pending claims have been deemed allowable. Applicants submit, therefore, that the instant application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration, withdrawal of the rejection set forth in the above-noted Office Action and an early Notice of Allowance are requested.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should be directed to our address listed below.

Respectfully submitted,



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